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# F R E E D O M

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**FREEDOM**  
**GENERAL PRINCIPLES**

*Περὶ παντὸς τὴν ἐλευθερίαν*





## FREEDOM

FREEDOM is the watchword of England, and, through her, of all English-speaking peoples. The watchword of Rome was Law; of France, it is Liberty. Freedom combines the two contradictory principles of law and liberty. Neither of the subordinate principles is good by itself. Law ends in tyranny: liberty, in anarchy. From neither tyranny nor anarchy can any advancement of civilization be expected. Freedom, or the compromise between the two, in which neither has a decisive predominance, is the sole condition of progress. It is through freedom, and not by liberty alone, that 'human development in its richest diversity' can be realized. And this, as Wilhelm v. Humboldt remarks, in a passage prefixed by J. S. Mill to his essay 'On Liberty', is a matter of 'absolute and essential importance'. He might have gone farther. It is the sole and exclusive end of all ethical action which we call good.

This use of terms may be objected to as unusual and arbitrary. I can think of no other. There are three concepts to which words must be fitted. Those are the conflicting impulses of activity and restraint, and their amalgamation as restrained or

organized activity; and the only words in our language which will serve our purpose are liberty, law, and freedom. Licence is an excess of liberty, as slavery is an excess of restraint, but liberty and licence are no more convertible terms than law and slavery are.

‘Human development in its richest diversity is nothing but a picturesque expression for the output of human activity in its greatest possible intensity and variety. A man, who, like Robinson Crusoe before his encounter with Friday, lived by himself on a desert island, must still be a law to himself, but, subject to that, he might exercise all his faculties to the utmost, and in any direction he chose. He would be subject to no external restraint. When, however, he is a member of a society, the centre of interest is transferred from the individual to the society; and the final end of action becomes the greatest output of power, not of himself, but of the whole community of which he is a member. In order to secure that object it is necessary that the activities of all and each of the members of the society should be co-ordinated and focussed in one direction, towards a common end.

The principle of direction and co-ordination is (in the widest sense of the word) law; and it is through law that a community becomes free, and

capable of putting forth its maximum of power. Without law, it is incapable of putting forth any collective power whatever; and law is essentially the curtailment of the liberties of each individual member of the community. But the only justification for any retrenchment of individual liberty lies in the superior needs of the community as a whole; and when law carries its interference beyond that point the community ceases to be free.

The opposition between activity and restraint is universal, and extends to every branch of human conduct. Genius itself is unproductive unless it submits to rule. Where both are indispensable it is useless to ask which is the more valuable; but it is certain that, if they are to be distinguished as end and means, it is activity that must take the place of end. In political freedom we submit to law for the sake of liberty. To invert the terms, and say that we value liberty for the sake of law, would be a palpable absurdity. Nevertheless, to attribute the higher honour to law, so long as both are preserved, need not injure the cause of freedom. Rome, between the expulsion of the kings and the rise of the Empire, afforded the highest and most enduring example of political freedom the world had ever seen. That law should be preferred in honour is indeed desirable. The passion for liberty is so universal, and of such overwhelming strength,

that no adventitious aid that may reinforce its opposite can safely be neglected. On the other hand, we may remember that law is an incident of evolution, and that if we care to push our speculations beyond the scheme of our present life, we can afford to dispense with the concept. We can, if we like, imagine an earthly Paradise, where every one gets, without effort, everything he wants. Or, in a higher vein, religion speaks to us of the perfect liberty of the regenerate. But those are regions in which no sober philosophy will venture to intrude.

There are two kinds of community of which freedom may be predicated. First, the community of discordant impulses which make up an individual. The co-ordination of these for the prosecution of a common end is moral freedom ; and the greatest output of power is attained when the controlling principle is the conscience. In that case a man's aim is the development of his highest self. The second kind of community is the collection of individual men who make up a nation. A nation is free when the discordant interests of its members are co-ordinated in such a way as to secure the greatest possible output of force for the prosecution of the national end or ideal. The co-ordinating principle in political freedom is law, including public opinion of all kinds.

*Personal Freedom*

It is through the co-ordination of all the impulses of an individual by some internal rule or principle that his higher impulses are kept alive, and he becomes a reasonable man. That kind of co-ordination which provides for the satisfaction of the greatest possible volume and number of his conflicting impulses is freedom. Freedom is not itself the ultimate end of action, but it is the means, or necessary condition, of personal 'development in its richest diversity'. It is the condition which allows a man to maintain his present position in the scale of evolution, and to advance beyond it.

Moral freedom is the foundation of all other kinds of freedom. Every individual may be regarded as a republic of impulses to action, which are combined for the prosecution of a common end. Left to itself each several impulse must assert itself without regard to all the others. A state of things in which this could be realized might be described as perfect moral liberty. In practice it would be anarchy, or a war of all against all, in which the strongest must win. But the strongest impulse is, with most men, one of those in which he most nearly resembles the lower orders of creation. And degradation means loss of power, and eventual extinction. The man who is bound

by no law, human or divine, is no longer a man but a monster.

Though it will be generally admitted that the conscience is, or ought to be, the supreme law for the guidance of human conduct, this is not the only answer that has been given to the problem, and a few words of explanation will not be superfluous. We may notice two others, in order to show on what grounds conscience deserves the preference, when the ends which are sought are those of freedom.

The first of these answers is that Religion gives the rules for right conduct. This is true in a sense, but, in the religion which we profess, the end is placed in another world, and it is gained by entry into a new life, in which all the ends of our life in this world are rejected as devoid of independent value.

With this aim freedom has no concern whatever. Its aims are confined to this world, and do not look beyond it. The aims of religion have no reference to evolution. The soul of a Michael Angelo is of no superior value to the soul of a naked savage. The aim of freedom is advance in civilization, and the whole scale of its values lies between the life of a savage and the life of a Michael Angelo: or, if political freedom be considered, between the institutions of Dahomey and

those of Great Britain. Its sole aim in the future is to increase that difference. None of these aims has any interest for religion. For that, all interest centres in the individual soul ; and the standard of value is transcendental.

The second answer is that which was given by the Greeks. The proper guide of human conduct, they said, is wisdom ; and by wisdom they meant knowledge, or a systematic acquaintance with all the facts of past experience. This might serve very well for a life whose conditions were stationary, and where the future contained no new elements beyond what were to be found in the past. But it is of only limited use in conditions which are marked by the continual appearance of new features, which are always unexpected, and which it is not given to human reason to foresee. A rule which is based exclusively on the past is fatal to adaptation, and it defeats, instead of promoting, the ends of freedom.

None of these objections apply to the conscience. That has no end of its own ; or none, at any rate with which we are acquainted. The essential character of its commands is that they must be obeyed without regard to consequences. The special function of the conscience is to support particular classes of impulses. It is not an impulse itself but an arbiter between rival impulses when the



conflict. And the weight of its authority is always thrown on the side of the weak, and against the strong. It supports the more recently evolved impulses of self-abnegation, which are useful to societies, against the more primitive and more powerful impulses of self-assertion; and, in this way, its influence is always in the direction of advance. Its effects, therefore, are always in accordance with the aim of freedom; that is to say, the elevation of human beings, in this life, to still higher levels beyond the stage of barbarism.

This explanation, so far as it goes, has no trace of mythology, or even of metaphysics. It implies nothing as to the origin, or the real nature, of the conscience, but concerns itself with the more fruitful question of what it does, or what are its natural functions. It attributes no gift of prescience. In fact, by making it indifferent to consequences, it implicitly denies that. The function of conscience being to strengthen the newer and more elevated types of impulse in every character, it follows that it should vary in accordance with the special needs of each individual character. And this we see it does. Men who are on a low level of ethical experience are hardly aware of its existence. Its highest point of development was perhaps in the inner voice of Socrates, in whom it took a form with which few of us are personally familiar. Its

most widely diffused manifestation is in what we call conscientiousness; the quality which distinguishes a good workman from a bad one. The conscientious workman is he in whom the claims of his work prevail over his own dread of exertion. In its variety and still more in its capacity for development, the conscience resembles all the higher products of evolution. Its action is in exact harmony with the aims of freedom.

We shall find in the course of this inquiry that morality itself has its stages, which correspond with the succeeding stages in human development. Each individual has his separate conscience, which is adapted to his own personal character and needs. From the sum of the separate consciences of its citizens each nation derives a national morality, adapted to the prosecution of the national ideal. And, finally, all separate codes of morality are merged in a single system which has for its aim the elevation of the human race as a whole. Obedience to the moral law, in all stages of development, may properly be designated as wisdom. But at no stage can men afford to neglect the claims either of religion or of science. The progress of humanity must be harmonious and comprehensive. Wisdom by itself is of little avail, unless it is accompanied by both religious faith and scientific knowledge.

*Political Freedom*

We may proceed to the definition of political freedom. Man is a gregarious animal; that is to say, he combines with his fellows for the prosecution of a common end. The compromise which constitutes freedom is here raised to a higher level. The conflict of impulses within the individual is succeeded by the conflict of individuals within the community. Their activities clash, and each man's action curtails or controls the activities of his neighbours. In questions of external goods, such as property, this is obvious. Two men may be impelled to strive for the same piece of land, but both cannot enjoy the whole of it at the same time. The two ideas of effort and conflict are so intimately associated that the same word is used for both. In material interests, to strive implies strife.

Beyond the conflict for material goods, and on a higher ethical level than that, is the conflict between opinions, or beliefs. Its superior importance is reflected in the greater heat and bitterness with which it is waged; both between parties within a state, and between competing nations. Advocates of liberty at all price have urged that it is not a proper field for the intervention of government. But public opinion would itself be unhealthy if it supported government in tolerating the public

utterance, by speech or in writing, of blasphemy, obscenity, or treason. The argument that any interference of that kind might bring about the destruction of new and valuable varieties of opinion deserves particular notice, as it tells against the case it is meant to support, and indicates its special dangers. A gardener who was advised to let weeds alone for fear he might extirpate new and valuable varieties of plants, would know that what would follow would be the destruction of all except the rankest varieties of weeds. What men want for their own use they must protect and mature by their own care. It is the same in the field of thought. In conditions of perfect liberty it is debased opinions that gain the upper hand, and the more elevated that go under. The law is indeed universal. No good habits of any kind, in any field of thought or action, can be acquired or maintained except by the painful and vigilant repression of bad habits.

Without a paramount end, which is common to all, or to a decisive majority, no collection of individuals can be called a community : there will be no co-ordination of interests and no freedom. Even so simple an event as a conflict between the savage inhabitants of adjoining tracts of country introduces a common end of action on each side. Each contends for its own existence and for the victory

through which that is secured. To that extent the interest of every individual will be identical with that of every other in the same group ; and common action will demand obedience, or the sacrifice of personal inclinations, to the authority of a chieftain. Individual liberty will give way to collective freedom. The idea of a social compact, when understood literally, is of course untrue ; but, as a parable, it gives a serviceable notion of what actually took place. The whole process has been unconscious, but what it really amounted to was that individuals sacrificed to the state so much of their liberty as was necessary for the preservation of what they retained. The sacrifice was not voluntary but of necessity.

The collective existence of the community is the common end of all communities, in all stages of civilization ; but in none is it the final or ultimate end. Existence is never worth having on its own account, but only for the use which is made of it. Communities, even in the earliest stages, differ in the objects for which they live. Abel was a shepherd, Cain an agriculturist. In the same way as life is the universal condition without which no man can realize his personal ends, so is collective existence the primary condition without which no community can realize theirs. And to prefer the life of the individual to the existence of the community is, by

ethical standards, to postpone a higher class of ends to a lower. Moreover, it entails the sacrifice of all that is valuable in the life of the individual himself.

*Political Justice universal condition of Political Freedom*

Much learning and ingenuity have been devoted to the elaboration of abstract political constitutions which may serve to secure freedom against anarchy on the one hand and despotism on the other. The labour has not been wasted; it has indeed been indispensable on the occurrence of crises, such as the restoration of order after the French Revolution; the erection of a new state out of the revolted colonies in America; and at least twice in the course of English history; when the old political conditions have been swept away and new ones must be provided for. On such occasions it has been the practice of the statesmen to whom the task was committed to preface their practical proposals with a proclamation of what they believed to be the essential and universal rights of humanity; whose maintenance must be secured by all constitutions whatever, at all times and in all places. There is, however, only one principle which is the universal and necessary condition of political freedom; and that is, political justice, or justice in the distribution of power and property.

Beneath the shifting mass of conflicting principles which must be combined for the prosecution of its common end by every civilized state, two are elementary and universal; quantity, or numbers; and quality, or personal merit. These always conflict, and the due recognition of both is political justice. In order that a state may be free, that is to say, maintain its further advance in the direction of its appointed end, it is necessary that it should secure, first, the freedom of every individual citizen, whatever his merits may be; and, secondly, the just reward for qualities which give to particular citizens a superior value. This is only the survival, under infinitely varied forms, of the primitive conflict between the undifferentiated mass of individuals and the aggression of the stronger.

The first and most important modification in the terms of this conflict arises from the impossibility of ascertaining an even approximately correct equation, applicable to single cases, between merit and reward. A partial solution to this difficulty has been discovered by making rewards, when they have once been gained, hereditary. Pascal observes with reference to this difficulty (*Pensées*, art. v, s. 3): ‘The greatest of evils is civil war. That is certain to occur if people claim a reward for merit: for every one will assert merit for himself. The evils which may be apprehended

from a fool who succeeds by right of birth are neither so great, nor so certain.' This expedient, though it may fail to correspond exactly with the theory of justice, has usually been found successful in maintaining, over considerable periods, the integrity of a state. A people who are accustomed to inequality of conditions will not be ready to question its justice in every particular instance; and they will be much more ready to acquiesce when the aristocracy has not crystallized in a closed caste. Every promotion from the ranks will be a fresh assertion of the principle; exceptional merit has always the hope of a sufficient, if not nicely calculated, reward; and a conventional inequality is not resented, so long as a real equality, which permits a man to rise from the lowest to the highest social level, is recognized; and still less when, through the wholesome rule of a primogeniture, men may descend from the highest to the lowest. The recognition of the hereditary principle with regard to material wealth will aim at the same result in a pure republic as is achieved under an aristocracy by hereditary rank, but not, perhaps, with the same success. It gives an undue preference to material ends, and to the faculties by which they are realized.

The function of law, and generally of state control, in that co-ordination of individuals for the



prosecution of a common end which we call freedom, is to maintain internal peace by curbing the self-assertion of the strong, and preserving to the weak a reasonable scope for the exercise of their own activities. It follows, as a general principle, that the weaker party will appeal to the law, while the stronger will provide the champions of liberty. This principle, though it is often obscured, is not by any means obsolete. A despot has no need of law ; an aristocracy will uphold its claims in opposition to a king, and reduce him to the status of a limited monarchy. The owners of wealth, whether from commerce or from land, always demand fresh extensions of liberty, which they disguise under the sacred name of freedom. *Laissez faire*, freedom of trade, freedom of contract and of competition, are little more than demands for a return to the primitive state of chaos, when there was no freedom, and liberty was the monopoly of superior force. The lower, and more numerous classes, on the other hand, will ask for special laws for their protection, and, in the name of socialism, invest the state with an unlimited authority. They will not demand an extension of liberty until, through some social or political revolution, they have already gained the upper hand. These considerations apply, of course, only to a state where the conflict between weak and strong is still in progress. Where large classes

have been altogether excluded from power, they will demand the complete destruction of political institutions, and leave neither law nor liberty.

The danger of civil war, or political disruption, against which we are warned by Pascal, will be dealt with later on, when we have determined what, for the purposes of freedom, we mean by a state or political community. For our present needs it is enough to say that the complete victory of either tendency will at once arrest evolution. The principle of personal equality, when it has realized itself in socialism, or in any form of pure democracy, can only be maintained by the elimination of originality, or individual eminence: the principle of reward for merit, when carried to its full length, annihilates the liberty of the masses, and ends in despotism. In both cases we arrive at a dead level, and in neither is there left any trace of the liberty, the maintenance and further development of which form the only justification for the control of law. Men were created strong and weak, wise and foolish, clever and dull; and civilization has added many new distinctions, such as rich and poor, noble and common. So long as distinctions survive, men will advance and prosper—but not longer. On the other hand, it is equally true and necessary that all men should have their due share of liberty, and be equal before the law.

Unless both these principles are recognized, there is no freedom and no progress. Rome retained her freedom and her power of expansion so long as political power was divided between the Senate and the people: when the people conquered she lost both.

### *Parties*

Every question has two sides, and ordinary men are so constituted that they can no more see both at the same time, than they can, with their bodily vision, see both the sides of a closed door. A man's practical beliefs are not determined solely by his position in society, but rather by his whole philosophy of life, in which his ethical sentiments, however derived, and, still oftener, his religious beliefs, or want of belief, are the more potent ingredients. On all these points men will be divided, and it is well for healthy progress that they should be. In political questions, the main line of division will be drawn between the party of liberty and the party of law. With the exception of a few philosophers at one end of the scale, and, at the other, of men who are too indolent to take an interest in public affairs, the whole community will be split into two parties, each of which will be engaged in the promotion of one only of the two great conflicting aims whose clash gives birth

to freedom, and maintains its life. Each will be blind to the claims of the other, or so nearly blind as to refuse them a just and equal hearing; and each will exaggerate to a degree, which to an impartial bystander must seem extravagant, the claims of his own. Nor is this arrangement without its use. If every citizen were an impartial judge there would be no conflict; and the whole community would lack the heat and emotional force on which its corporate life is dependent.

When a democracy clamours for more law, it is for party purposes, and as a weapon against political adversaries: not in the interest of the whole community, or as a protection against external dangers. And the same thing is true when the wealthy demand an extension of liberty. In this conflict the opposed principles are known in our own days as that of collectivism, and that of individualism. The former is the party of law, the latter of liberty; of a liberty, it is true, which Goethe describes as 'Willkür jeder für sich', while he betrays his sympathies with the other side in his maxim 'Und das Gesetz kann nur uns Freiheit geben'. Both parties are equally necessary to the health of every political community, and their conflict will not be a source of weakness so long as they are ready to combine for the defence of the common ideal. It is only when they allow that to be eclipsed by their party

ideals that they bring about a serious danger of disruption.

The cause of law always labours under one serious disadvantage. Law means restraint, or the sacrifice, in some measure, of what we desire, and its appeal lies to the higher instincts. Liberty, on the other hand, means the satisfaction of all desires, and needs no recommendation. When a hedonist philosophy of life is prevalent, the desires and the intellectual convictions point in the same direction, and the alliance will be well-nigh irresistible. For this, and for other reasons, the philosophy of pleasure will always be congenial to the party of wealth. The cause of freedom can only be rescued from defeat when the alliance between material prosperity and hedonist philosophy is opposed by the strongest possible demonstration on the part of the moral law.

The universal principle which is to be observed in the constitution of every free community must contain two features. In the first place it must combine, and not divide, the citizens ; and, secondly, it must be common to all of them. The principle of the greatest happiness of the greatest number, as understood by those who profess it, fails in both respects. Material happiness is secured by material wealth, and the same item of material wealth, as we have already observed, can only be enjoyed by

one man at a time. Two men cannot use the same shilling without dividing it. The pursuit of material happiness, therefore, divides and does not combine the citizens. The concrete example of the disputes between labour and capital brings this down to the level of obvious fact. Again, the term, 'the greatest number', necessarily implies the exclusion of some, and, possibly, of a considerable number, of the citizens; and, if any are excluded, there is no longer a community: those who are excluded are no longer citizens. Again, Bentham's formula entirely overlooks the claims of merit, and gives no principle for guiding the distribution of happiness. The coward and the hero stand on the same level. The proper formula for the constitution of a free state will be—the greatest possible activity of all, without exception. No happiness is of value unless it follows, as a reward, on activity.

### *Value of Freedom*

This seems all that need be said at present about the general conditions of freedom. We will next endeavour to account for its supremacy among the moral values; a position in which its only rival is justice. But there can be no freedom without justice, and no security for justice except freedom; for the justice of a despot depends on his personal qualities, and will seldom survive him. The two

are mutually interdependent ; they have no separate interests, and it is impossible that they should in any way be brought into conflict. The values of both are equal, and rest on a common ground.

There is no necessary connexion between freedom and happiness. The stock instance of diffused happiness is the era of the Antonines, under a despotism ; and it is certain that people have often been happy under a despot. The reign of Peisistratus affords another illustration. For the true explanation of the value of freedom we need not travel beyond its definition. Freedom is the necessary condition for the exercise of the greatest possible number and diversity of activities, first within each individual, and then within a political community ; that is to say, in both, for the release of the greatest possible degree and variety of power ; and, as the increase of power is the index of advance in civilization, it is that which gives freedom its pre-eminent value. Happiness, as in the era of the Antonines, and as there was some reason to fear it might be in our own time, is not inconsistent with decay. On the other hand, though freedom need not produce happiness, it always determines its value. The happiness of a free man is worth having : that of a slave is not. The Belgians prefer unhappiness with freedom to the prospect of happiness under a German governor ; because, in the latter case,

they would lose all prospect of national development.

All progress towards an end is conditioned by conflict; and the extent of the progress is proportionate to the intensity and variety of the activities which the conflict calls into play. The common end of an individual is his self-development, and his progress is dependent on the conflict of the various internal impulses which make up his whole character. A perfectly consistent character, from which all conflict had been eliminated, would be satisfied with the position it had already gained, and would feel no call for improvement. Such a man would soon be outstripped by others who were not equally well satisfied with themselves.

In the same way, the common end of a political society is its own development; and, for further development, or increase of strength, it is dependent on conflict of interests between individuals and parties among its own citizens. A perfectly homogeneous community, which had no internal dissensions, is only possible in a state of stagnation. In a free community the only point on which all need be united is the prosecution of the common end which unites them. To this, it is true, all other ends must be subordinate. The citizens must at all times, in peace as well as in war, be united against a common foe, but, without conflicting



interests among themselves, there is no prospect of any increase in the force with which they can oppose him. England has to thank party for her growth, and the subordination of party to national ends for her safety.

In the same way as the growth of the individual depends on the conflict of internal impulses, and the growth of the community on the conflict of internal interests, so does the human race as a whole depend for its evolution on the conflict of national ends or ideals. Further than this we are unable to go. All the conflicts on which the evolution of the race is dependent are between opposed elements within itself. The only universal interests of humanity are, first, that the conflict should continue, and, secondly, that the evil principle, or principle of degeneration, should not gain a decisive advantage over the good principle, or principle of advance.

Thus we find, within the range of ethics, a hierarchy of ends, culminating with the supreme end of the evolution, or advance to a higher level, of the human race as a whole. This advance gives the ultimate standard of ethical value, and it rests, as a necessary base, on two subordinate classes of value, those, namely, of the evolution of the individual, and of the evolution of the body politic. All these three are mutually interdependent. It is

impossible to realize any one of them in the absence of the other two; and the indispensable condition for advance in the cases both of the individual and of the body politic is freedom. There can be no free individuals in a state which is either anarchic or under a despotic government; there can be no free state when the individual citizens either have no respect for duty, or are at the mercy of their passions: and there can be no advance in the race as a whole, without advance both in the individuals and in the communities out of which the race is constituted. Freedom then, both moral and political, is the keystone of evolution, and the essential condition for the realization of the highest values.

The conflict of opposed ideals, which is the universal form in which evolution exhibits itself to our observation, introduces another link in the chain which connects the freedom of the individual with the development of the race. A nation loses its power to maintain its ideal as soon as it is conquered by a nation with an opposed ideal. It then drops out of the world-conflict, and becomes worthless for the purposes of evolution. National independence, then, is another essential condition for human progress. It is only in an independent state that men can be free in themselves or in their relations with their neighbours, and, on the other hand, it is only where men and institutions are free

that national independence can be maintained for long. The necessity is reciprocal.

*Ideals national—not universal*

The use of the word nation in the last few paragraphs was unavoidable ; but it was premature, and must now be justified. Our object was to show that the progress of humanity as a whole, which is the supreme ethical end, is conditioned by two subordinate stages of progress, first, that of the individual, and, secondly, that of the society ; progress in both these stages being dependent on freedom. For practical purposes every one knows what is an individual, and the term needs no definition. What, for the purposes of practical politics, is to be understood by a political unit is not equally obvious. The question has given rise to conflicting interpretations, and the recognition of independent communities with separate claims, apart from the claims which are common to the whole of humanity, has been the subject of a controversy which up to the time of the Reformation was of paramount interest in the world of political thought ; and which, even now, has not been finally disposed of.

Community of aim or ideal is not by itself sufficient to distinguish a political society. Where-

ever two or more individuals are associated together there must be a common aim. We may leave out minor associations, such as those for the purposes of trade and commerce, of plunder, or of missionary enterprise, which have a common end, but have never been regarded as political units, and proceed to consider the case of municipal governments. These have been during long periods of history, and over large areas of the world's surface, political units; and the principals through whose conflicts the advance of civilization has been secured. But they are so no longer, and in the loss of that position we discover the distinctive feature which constitutes a political unit. That distinctive feature is sovereignty; or an internal authority, however vested, which enacts and enforces the law, but is not itself amenable to it. In its want of accountability, and its absolute authority, sovereignty, in an ideal state, holds a position which is closely analogous to that which is held by conscience in an ideal man. A sovereign community is a state, whether it be a village or an empire. But neither may the conscience be identified with the man nor the sovereign with the community. In both they are only the governing principles. Their complete independence of control might seem to entitle both the conscience and sovereign power to the attribution of perfect liberty. But it would only

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be by a metaphor. Neither liberty nor freedom can be properly predicated except of whole individuals or communities. They presume internal conflict: in the first, the conflict of impulses; in the second, of private interests.

Loss of independence necessarily involves loss of sovereignty. The internal authority is no longer absolute, but under the control of an external power. The community in which it formerly resided is no longer a political unit; nor can it enjoy political freedom. The small Greek city-states were independent political units, and their continual conflicts among themselves were attended by a rapid growth in civilization in all its branches, such as has never been equalled either before or since. When they became subject to the Macedonian Empire the growth was at once arrested, and soon ceased altogether. The people of Athens remained, but not the sovereignty. In order that a people may be sovereign it must be organized under fixed rules, and must declare and execute its will with recognized formalities. It is then distinguished from a mob. An *ἐκκλησία* is no longer a *σύνοδος*.

At the commencement of our era the whole of western civilization was under the undivided sovereignty of Imperial Rome. There was no longer any conflict of states or state ideals. The growth

of civilization was at once arrested; nor was it resumed till eight centuries later, when the seeds were sown of a new conflict. The ideals of both the Empire and the Papacy were universal: one was centred in this world; the other in the world to come, and the dispute was ended by the emergence of a number of national states, each with its independent national ideal; and a number of independent forms of the same religion, which nearly, though not exactly, corresponded with the number of states. The system of competing national ideals, under which we now live, has been the parent of our modern civilization.

It would be a mistake to suppose that the dispute between religion and civil government has been completely disposed of, or that it could be disposed of by a comprehensive toleration of all kinds of religious beliefs; and, as the point is of vital consequence in its bearings on freedom, I propose to take this opportunity of noticing it. Complete autonomy, whether of religion or of the conscience, is, and always must be, in theory at least, incompatible with civil sovereignty. Of this, the following case will serve at once as illustration and proof.

A considerable number of individual citizens may base a claim to be exempted from service in the army, on the plea that their religion, or their conscience, or perhaps both, forbid them to bear

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arms, or to take life. To this plea there is one sufficient answer: the whole duty of a nation, as represented by its government, is to preserve its own existence for the maintenance of its national ideal. It may be necessary to place every able-bodied citizen in the field; and of this necessity the sovereign government is, and, of its essence, always must be, the sole judge. To admit the validity of any such plea would be to recognize the claims of an external and superior authority, and the civil power would thereby abdicate its sovereignty. From these considerations emerges a very important maxim: whenever a universal end comes into conflict with a national end the former must give way. The universal end itself can only be realized by the observance of this rule: for the advance of civilization will not survive the destruction of national ideals; and a national ideal ceases to exist when the nation ceases to be independent.

On the other hand, though national sovereignty must repel all dictation from universal ideals, it must not on that account be blind to their influence. If it subjects them to unnecessary contradiction or outrage, it will soon forfeit its own authority. Fortunately, the principle in this case, though it claims to be universal, is not so in fact. If a religion is to be judged by its collective authority, and not identified with the opinions which

are held by some of its sects, it is certain that Christianity has never condemned the profession of a soldier, but has, over and over again, enjoined war in a just cause. From the beginning, Christians served in the army ; at first few, and, at the time of the conversion of the Empire, in very large numbers. Soldiers contributed more than their fair proportion to the roll of Christian saints and martyrs. The only authoritative pronouncement against enlistment was when the Council at Nicaea forbade Christians to serve under the pagan Licinius against the Christian Constantine (Harnack, *Mission und Ausbreitung*, 395). This difficulty is especially likely to arise under a government which respects all religious opinions impartially. The greater the number and the variety of opinions, the stronger is the likelihood of a collision between the government and one or more of them.

Though this has been the ruling of the universal Church, and of its principal branches up to the present day, there has, of course, been much dissent. Sects like the Quakers, and many before them, have disputed it ; but some have been explicitly condemned, and nearly all have died out, not from persecution, but from spontaneous exhaustion, and loss of adherents. They have nearly always forgotten that their doctrine forms part of a system, and has no independent validity. The command,



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turn the other cheek, is no more binding than the command, sell all thou hast and give to the poor. If a man will not fight, neither should he trade, or, indeed, marry. These are all precepts in a system of complete renunciation of worldly interests ; and one of them by itself has no justification without the rest. It is clear that the adoption of the whole system, or, indeed, of any of its precepts, would bring about the complete destruction, not only of society, but of the whole human race. Without marriage or trade, or the right of self-defence, the present order of things must come to an end. A nation has no more right to take the risk of destruction than a man has to commit suicide. To maintain life, and make the best of it, is a duty which is common to both. If a man would withdraw from the conflict, he must become a monk.

Another instance, this time of conscience and not religion, is that of conscientious objections to vaccination. This, though of vastly inferior practical importance, is of equal value as a question of principle. Its insignificance may or may not justify its recognition ; but mere neglect involves no abdication of its supreme authority on the part of the state. If thereby the health and lives of large numbers of citizens, whose conscience was differently constituted, were seriously imperilled, the recognition would no doubt be withdrawn.

When public safety on the one side, and private religion or conscience on the other are in opposition, there can be neither submission nor compromise. The first is the duty of the state, the second, of the individual, and, for both, duty is supreme. The man who, for bribe or menace, disobeys his private conscience, and the government which, for any reason, yields to its claims when they are adverse, are both traitors—the man against himself, the government against the country of whose welfare it is the guardian. The only escape for the individual is martyrdom, and to the nation itself its martyrs are no disgrace; while they, by universal consent, have exhibited in themselves the highest form of virtue, and are, therefore, deserving of the highest form of happiness as their reward; but that reward they ought to look for elsewhere; and, when they are sincere, they do.

No religion, however advanced, has condemned war unconditionally. The church which proclaimed the truce of God, at the same time preached the Crusades. But in all its modern forms it has demanded a valid motive, and it has attempted, with much success, to mitigate its ferocity, discharging, in this way, some of the functions of an international tribunal. The absence of religion from a national ideal is an unmixed evil. If common to both sides, it brings all the combatants nearer

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to the level of brutes ; if peculiar to one, that side only. And when they differ on this point the victory of one will promote, of the other, throw back, the cause of civilization. But it must operate from within, and conform itself to the other features of the national ideal. It must be structural, and not parasitic.

A third universal end of freedom, besides the realization of the aims of religion, or of the individual conscience, has been found in the realization of the aims of morality. This however is irreconcilable with national freedom, for the same reason which applies in the case of religion. One nation differs from another as greatly in its moral ideals as it does in its religious, and to enforce uniformity would be to destroy the mechanism by which evolution is now effecting its ends. The destruction of a nation's moral ideal would be the same thing as the destruction of its freedom ; and this, besides being highly undesirable, is not within the range of practical politics. This conclusion however, though true in itself, is not in conflict with a wider conception, which has not yet been distinctly formulated, though its hold over the more advanced peoples is daily increasing in strength. That is the conception of a community of nations, which, having for its connecting principle the advancement of the human race as a whole, should

stand in the same relation to the freedom of nations as that does to the freedom of the individual. The legislation of a community of that kind would be guided by the aims of a universal morality. On this subject we hope to add a few words later on.

As an universal ideal, common to the whole of humanity, neither religion nor morality is at all likely to supplant the various national ideals whose conflict is the primary condition of human development. The mischief they do is indirect, and consists in running counter to the spirit of patriotism, and deadening its influence. They find their expression in discordant and irrelevant councils; and the leaders of the people will cry aloud, like Ajax, for deliverance from the cloud which blinds and paralyses their soldiers.

### *Distinctions of Nationality.*

All types of institution change and become obsolete. The principle of nationality as the bond which holds together a political unit, and opposes it to other units, can expect no exemption. It has only recently emerged into full recognition, and may be destined to further extension and development, but it is not likely to escape supersession, sooner or later, by some wider and more comprehensive principle. What that will be it is useless to speculate. Sufficient for our purpose are the

facts of to-day. The principle of nationality has been objected to as elusive, and not susceptible of exact definition. Whether this be true or not, it lives, and works, and must be reckoned with, and, as far as possible, understood. We may proceed to consider very shortly what are its qualifications for the position which it occupies in our own days. The more abstract question of a general principle of growth, which has already substituted the nation for the city state, and may, problematically, substitute great ethical or religious beliefs in the place of the nation, is altogether beyond our scope.

Nationality is originally based upon race, or community of blood. When pushed back into the region of mythical origins, it implies that all the members of the community are descended from a common ancestor. This fiction, though of course not an historical fact, has an historical value, in calling attention to, and furnishing a plausible explanation of what is an undoubted fact. The members of a nation are distinguished by a common resemblance which is roughly comparable to that resemblance between members of the same family which we call family likeness. In neither case is the distinction infallible, but in a great majority of instances it is unmistakable. A difference in nationality will be suspected, where it exists, after a few minutes conversation with a stranger. It is not

worth our while to inquire how this distinction of national type comes into existence. But a few words ought to be said about one at least of the causes by which it is protected, and the uses which ensue from it.

Primitive history was not far wrong in dating the origin of nationality from the tower of Babel. Distinctions of language lie at the root of all historical developments, and the restoration of a universal form of speech might, not improbably, arrest or reverse the process. Unless peoples had been united among themselves, and segregated from others, by this powerful barrier, the units of family and tribe would never have been merged in the larger unit of nationality. Physical barriers by themselves are an insufficient protection. Two of the strongest natural fortresses in the world are Great Britain, with her sea, and India with her gigantic mountain ranges, but both have been overcome. In India, where the process has been many times repeated, the results are too complex to be dealt with here. In England, the conquerors and the conquered have been amalgamated in a new nationality by a new language, which preserves, and in its literature gives expression to, the most serviceable elements in the respective characters of each of the united peoples. The ideal to which Shakespeare gave a permanent literary form has supplied the

foundations to the national character in all lands beyond the seas in which the English language is spoken. The long eclipse of nationality during the contest between Pope and Emperor was only achieved by the retention of Latin as the sole literary medium. Dante was the necessary precursor to the growth and unification of the Italian nation.

Differences of language, by making the people of different nations mutually unintelligible, have put a bar to that intimate conversation which is the indispensable preliminary to a mutual sympathy and respect; and, when added to differences in appearance and manner, not only act as an additional obstacle to intercourse, but give rise to a mutual antipathy and antagonism which men always feel towards what they neither understand nor trust. Before improved means of communication had weakened the force of geographical barriers, these feelings often led to the prohibition of intermarriage, or of eating together at the same table; expressions of disgust, which, though not unknown among classes within the same nation, are not then reinforced by barriers of race and language. Other distinguishing characteristics are national gods, national forms of worship, and customs and traditions, all culminating in a complex national ideal; and the total mass is amply sufficient for the differ-

entiation of opposed units in the conflict on which all advance in civilization is dependent. Of the survival of international hatred in our own days we have had sufficient proof, though it may be stronger in some nations than in others.

It is not to be supposed that these distinctions, and the feelings they engender, are good in themselves, or deserving of approbation. On the contrary they are in direct contradiction to peace, charity, and happiness ; which, in the judgement of the great majority of mankind, are the goods which are most to be desired. But they are as essential to further evolution as self-sacrifice is ; and advance in civilization is the highest ethical good, which conditions advance in all the goods which we really value. We must remember that the effects of international hatred are not confined to the period of war, but only reach their full strength in the period which immediately follows it. The relations between the conquerors and the conquered will then be embittered by contempt on the one side and humiliation and disappointment on the other, and, on both, by an active desire for revenge for recent injuries. In the meantime, all the distinctions of language and appearance will remain, and the increased bitterness will spend itself exclusively on the weaker or conquered people. They need expect neither mercy, nor consideration.





# PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE  
TO UNIVERSAL MILITARY SERVICE

*Εἰς οἰωνὸς ἄριστος ἀμύνεσθαι περὶ πατρὸς*



# PRACTICAL APPLICATIONS

## RELATION BETWEEN FREEDOM AND UNIVERSAL MILITARY SERVICE

### *Preliminary*

THE peculiar duty, then, of every nation is the maintenance, development, and propagation of its own ideal ; and freedom is the sole universal condition under which this duty can be accomplished. Slavery, in one form or another, is the penalty for neglect, and that extinguishes, at the same time, both the duty and the means of accomplishing it. Before proceeding further we must notice and explain what is a very common fallacy. Men often say that they go to war with full confidence in the justice of their cause. If by this they mean that they are ready to run all risks rather than betray the sacred cause of justice, this is a very noble and inspiring sentiment ; it is the spirit of martyrdom, than which nothing can be more valuable. But if they mean that they trust to the justice of their cause for success, nothing could be more delusive, or fraught with more manifold dangers. In the

first place, they have only their own opinion to go on as to the justice of their cause. In the second, in conditions of evolution, injustice has almost as good a prospect of success as justice. History shows us that sometimes one prevails, at others, the other. To trust to the merits of your cause without taking the necessary means to maintain it, is to betray it, as surely as if you declined to expose yourself to any risks whatever. And the principal of those means is self-sacrifice. What a nation must rely on is not the goodness of its cause, but its own right arm, and the manliness of its citizens: and the better the cause, the more ignominious is its betrayal.

If we leave out of consideration the personal qualities and beliefs of the individual citizens, which are the subject of general ethics, the survival of a national ideal is dependent on the strength of the national government by which it is represented. And this question must be considered under two aspects, which are so closely connected and interdependent that neither can be dealt with separately. The first is the relations of the government with other nations; the second, its relations with its own citizens. Mistakes in one case lead to the loss of independence; in the other, to internal disruption; and in both to the destruction of the national ideal. Success, in its foreign relations depends on

the measures which are taken by the government for utilizing to the best effect all the resources which are at its disposal; in its internal relations, on its justice, and on nothing else. We have already explained what we mean by justice. A nation is free so long as its institutions are just, and no longer.

For the measures which it should adopt in the marshalling of its resources, a nation must be guided by the nature of its resources which it has at its disposal; and that again is largely determined by the direction in which its activities have been habitually exercised. Whatever that may be, there is only one practical end for all. The production of the greatest possible amount of strength or power, in subordination to their diverse ideals, is the common immediate end of all nations, as it is of every separate individual, and of the whole human race when regarded under the aspect of evolution. For the maintenance of its freedom and independence, a nation requires the utmost attainable degree of power. Not an ounce can be spared. It is futile to talk of degrees of power, or to calculate how much is required in order to meet all known contingencies. The wisest statesman has nothing but probability to guide him, and, the wider his range of vision, the greater will be his distrust of what lies beyond it. His aim will be to provide

against all dangers, whether foreseen or unforeseen ; and for that purpose he requires the maximum of activities of all kinds, co-ordinated for the single end of national independence.

### *Commercial and Military Ideals*

Material power, and it is that with which we are at present concerned, takes two forms, and is represented either by material wealth, or by material or brute force ; and these may be regarded in the light of opposed ideals. All other forms of power, such as religion, or science, or moral qualities, may be used in support of both of these, and are not peculiar to either, though their characters will be profoundly modified by reaction to the cause in which they are employed. The morality of a merchant is not the same as the morality of a soldier. When regarded as separate ideals, the former may be denoted as commercial, and the temper which it generates, as commercialism ; the other as military, and its appropriate temper, as militarism. The combination of the two, in a proper proportion, produces the greatest attainable volume of material power. Either of them, by itself, or in undue predominance over the other, leads to weakness and degeneration. A short account of the main features of each kind of temper

will assist us in stating the main practical problems with which the maintenance of freedom is confronted. Purely spiritual forces, like that of the Papacy, when it acquired its political supremacy in Europe without the help of a single soldier, lie outside of the province of political freedom.

### *The Military Spirit*

The distinguishing virtues of militarism are those which are called forth by the necessities of an army in the field. Every soldier knows that his own safety, and that of his comrades, is dependent on his immediate and unquestioning obedience to orders. He learns to sacrifice both his judgement and his will, and, on occasion, his life. He thus acquires a temper which though not identical with patriotism—for he may be a mercenary—is at least akin to it, and prepares him for its reception. Again, a life in the field is the best remedy for softness and indolence, and prepares a man to accept privations and fatigue, in their most deterrent forms, without complaint. While he is on service, every soldier must be, in the best sense of the word, an ascetic. Courage, endurance, and submission to authority, with their cognate virtues, may be summed up in English as manliness; which, in *virtus*, its Latin equivalent, denoted the sum of all



qualities that deserve respect. Areté, the Greek equivalent for virtue, and Arés, the name of the War god, are variations of the same word. In our own religion the military spirit retains nearly the same favour. In its collective form it describes itself as the Church Militant; its individual members are Christian soldiers. The New Testament abounds with similar metaphors. 'Fight the good fight'; 'Put on the whole armour of God'; and so forth.—On the other hand, its sympathies are not with commerce. Trade with the Spirit was the sin of Simon Magus. Thomas à Kempis bids us,<sup>1</sup> 'Give up all things, abandon all you desire, and you will find rest. This is the epitome of religious perfection.' The aim of the monk was rest; but the spirit was the same as that of the soldier, when he gives up all things, and leaves all that he loves, at the call of his country.

The chief virtue of militarism, before which all the others recede into the background, is that it strongly inculcates the spirit of cohesion. Every soldier knows that, in order to gain the end of the enterprise on which he is engaged, he must regard himself, not as an isolated individual, but as an integral part of the whole force. This solidarity of purpose is the highest of political virtues, and in its absence no political community can retain either

<sup>1</sup> *De Imitatione Christi*, iii. 52.

its internal freedom, or its national independence. *Esprit de corps* is a soldier's virtue and we fetch our name for it from France. It is the same thing as patriotism, but in a more restricted province.

Against the virtues of militarism must be reckoned its vices. The same circumstances which produce indifference to suffering in ourselves destroy pity and compassion for the sufferings of others, and, unless his temper is raised by impulses derived from another source, which is not military, a man is brought to a level below that of wolves and tigers. For cruelty is almost peculiar to him, and, while they are merely indifferent to the sight of pain, he will take pleasure in it, and seek it for its own sake. Hatred, no doubt, adds to the fury of a soldier's onset, and it adds at the same time to the pleasure which he takes in the torture of an enemy who is at his mercy. That this is not merely an abstract probability is shown by examples other than that of the Red Indians, and in races whose culture is far higher than theirs. It is needless to speak of the other vices, such as lust, envy, and arrogance, which, though they are common to all conditions of life, find in the military spirit their favourite soil. A race of soldiers, unless the bestial side of its character has been tempered by a large infusion of the instincts of peace, will be incapable of the deference to the wishes and the interests of others

which is essential to freedom ; and even its virtues will predispose it to the acceptance of servitude. It will not tolerate in others a blessing of which it knows itself to be incapable.

The military spirit, then, tells in the direction of control or law, and, as no one has ever identified law with freedom, or is likely to, it is not necessary to attempt a fuller description. All that we require is a general indication of its tendencies. With liberty the case is different. Liberty tells in the same direction as our desires, and is indeed nothing but the condition for their immediate gratification. It is therefore natural that men who have not paid much attention to the problems of life should, without inquiry, have identified it with freedom ; a thing which is admitted on all hands to be of the highest value, and in which liberty does, in fact, constitute the most prominent half. The tendency of commerce is in the direction of liberty, and in the following section of our subject the treatment must be much fuller.

### *The Commercial Spirit*

Of all the conditions under which commerce can be successfully prosecuted the most essential is peace. The saying 'We go to war that we may be at peace' breathes the spirit of commerce, and

would be out of place in the mouth of a soldier. And it is not true. Peace may be had without war, and without honour, by submission. When men go to war it is for freedom, and rather than lose that they would forego peace, and live in perpetual warfare. In this choice they are quite reasonable. ~~Peace without freedom is valueless.~~ It brings with it none of the blessings of peace—not even indolence and luxury, to say nothing of the higher values.

The spirit which is bred in a camp, and that which is bred by peaceful intercourse, differ in almost every particular, and are mutually antipathetic. The soldier and the tradesman are apt to regard one another with the unfriendly feelings which always animate the followers of opposed ideals; and an estrangement is set up between them which, though much less in degree, resembles both in origin and in nature the mutual hostility of separate nations. Neither side is likely to do justice to the good qualities of the other. In England the martial spirit was for long represented by the landed aristocracy. It was only with the immense development of manufactures, a movement which was largely assisted by the aristocracy themselves, through measures inspired by a purely commercial spirit, that the military spirit began to lose the precedence.

The leading virtue of commerce is charity. It is

to its interest to live in peace with all men, and not to be betrayed by anger and ill-feeling into conduct which may alienate customers. The deference, which is enjoined by interest, is closely allied to a genuine humility, which is slow to take offence, or to avenge injuries. To a merchant or a banker the solvency of his customers is of almost equal consequence with his own, and all growth in their prosperity will cause in him an almost equal satisfaction. Their interests (at least for a long way) are identical; in impoverishing them he impoverishes himself; and though, of course, he must himself take the precedence, he loves them (nearly) as well as he loves himself. Thus it comes that the Quakers, and similar sects, in whom one aspect of Christianity is strongly developed at the expense of its opposite, are distinguished for success in commerce. That the churches show less sympathy with them than might have been expected is perhaps due to the fact that however much they may love their neighbour they still put themselves in the first place, and not on an equality with him. The word love is indeed misplaced, and among men of commerce is seldom used except with reference to the loves of the market-place. The words by which they denote their own feelings, so far as they partake of altruism, are benevolence, charity, philanthropy, kindness, human sympathy,

and the rest. And quite rightly. No two characters are more unlike than the lover and the benefactor. One lays down his life for his friend: the other pays for his education.

Allied with charity are the compassion for the sufferings of others, which finds expression in the erection and endowment of public hospitals; and the regard for their intellectual welfare, to which we owe a great number of our colleges and schools. The same spirit, acting in the sphere of religion, equips and maintains expensive missionary enterprises, which, again, promote the expansion of commerce. One of the most characteristic exhibitions of this spirit was the enfranchisement of our slaves, and the measures we have since taken for the suppression of slavery elsewhere, and for improving the character and the prospects of the free negro. It is seen at its best in the relations of a mother state with its colonies, or with countries which it acquires rather by annexation than by conquest. A federal empire, in which all the component states are free, is beyond the dreams of the military spirit.

With the other blessings of peace we are so familiar that it would be waste of time to recount them. Order, tranquillity, popular contentment, plenty, prosperity, advance in arts and science, literature, refinement, splendour; these are the

fruits of commerce, and of peaceful liberty, so long as it remains uncorrupted. It may be called the source of all earthly blessings, with the exception of the spirit which defends them. With the corruptions of liberty we are equally familiar, but their correction runs counter to our desires, and to them we are often blind.

*Special Dangers of Commercialism to Personal Character*

Commerce, peace, and liberty, on the one hand, are opposed to militarism, war, and law and self-control, on the other, as two organic wholes. It is impossible to have either liberty or law without the appropriate spirit which gives life to each: and it is impossible to have freedom and national independence without both. Defects in liberty are defects in the spirit which gives it life and in the institutions in which it expresses itself; and, whether in the individual or in the state, they always, and must, of necessity, take the form of hostility to law. With the individual, in his relations with his inner nature, it is a refusal to submit to the voice of conscience and the general control of the laws of morality: in his public relations it is impatience with the laws of his country and the control of its government that

endanger the cause of freedom. The following pages will be taken up with as brief an account as is consistent with our purpose of some of the concrete forms in which this hostility exhibits itself. Our description, it is hoped, will leave no doubt that the close connexion which we have asserted to exist between moral or personal, and political or national freedom, is more than a mere abstract hypothesis: that it is, indeed, a vital fact. Defects in both have a common origin, identical results, and common remedies; and to ignore the connexion is to imperil, and eventually to lose, all that makes life worth having.—Germany, in the present crisis, suffers from excess of law; England, from excess of liberty. In neither are the conditions of freedom properly fulfilled.

The first effect of successful commerce is to emancipate the desires by removing all obstacles to their immediate gratification. This indeed, with most men, is the designed result or purpose of commerce; and, whether the desires be low or elevated in themselves, it is liberty, and nothing else. This immense access of liberty breeds a dislike and contempt for the moral law. The first of the virtues enjoined by the moral law is self-sacrifice: commerce supplies every facility for self-indulgence; and, to the commercial spirit, every form of asceticism or self-denial is ludicrous. The



man who practises it, in however small a matter, is judged a fool. Luxury may be defined as impatience with small inconveniences, the dread of a rose leaf in a bed of feathers. It incapacitates men for the endurance of their own pain, and even for the most necessary infliction of pain on criminals and enemies. The conscience on the other hand teaches that neither pleasure nor pain, whether our own or in others, counts for anything in comparison with the fulfilment of its own commands. And there is far worse beyond. These are the roots of evil; not the flowers.

Near akin to luxury is indolence. The two are joined together in common speech; they are always found together; and they proceed from the same source; that is impatience with the control of the moral law. Rest, or what hedonist philosophy is pleased to call harmony, is no doubt pleasant, but we live by conflict, and the plain facts of life, in agreement with the moral law, enjoin labour, and leave no alternative but voluntary labour or slavery. If a man will not work for himself he will surely work for another; and in either case he will live by the sweat of his brow. The doom is inexorable, and when, seduced by plenty, he declines to work for his own cause, a degeneracy of character sets in, which makes him an easy prey to a less degenerate enemy. The desire for enjoy-

ment combined with a dislike for work produces dishonesty, and his character parts with another element of strength in its loss of truthfulness. A man who is self-indulgent, slothful, and untrustworthy is of no use either to himself or to others ; and this is the certain fate of the individual who, preferring moral liberty to moral freedom, refuses to submit to the control of his conscience.

Another source of danger to freedom in a commercial state, though it has no direct connexion with the moral law, has a very material effect on the national character, and must not be left unnoticed. Commerce is, in existing conditions, mainly dependent on ships, and must, for its own protection, provide itself with a powerful navy. This introduces considerations which are important everywhere, but of especial importance in a country like our own, which is inaccessible by land. A people who are prejudiced by commerce against militarism, and who are adverse to hardship, will welcome a protection which costs them nothing in personal danger ; and it is certain that they will greatly overrate its value. They forget that safety demands that they shall put forth all the strength of which they are capable ; that manliness counts for more than money ; and that even if they sacrifice the whole of their money (which is most unlikely) they will still make use of less than half their strength :

and, finally, they overlook the lesson, enforced on them by history, that supremacy in naval power has often changed hands. In the threefold root of freedom—moral freedom, political freedom, and national independence—these dangers affect the last. But the danger to character is not less real. The military virtues are atrophied for want of exercise ; debased forms of amusement take the place of drill ; and to the vices of self-indulgence, indolence, and dishonesty, will be added insubordination, and a spirit so nearly resembling cowardice as not easily to be distinguished from it. This is not mere declamation. It will cost no long journey to observe the process of degeneration in full course in every grade of society.

Much more might be said about the degeneration of personal character which is brought about by the emancipation of liberty from law ; but this must suffice. Our object, as we have already indicated, is not to give an exhaustive account of a subject which really embraces all the relations of human life, but merely to dispel the mischievous confusion of thought which identifies liberty with freedom, and puts the former in the place of the latter as the supreme end of all our efforts. This error is of exactly the same class as the view which identifies justice with equality, and takes no account of inequalities of personal merit. The next section

will deal with the relations of liberty to political freedom, that is to say, to the community as represented by its government.

*Dangers to Freedom in National Government*

The special function of government is, we may repeat, the abolition of anarchy, that is to say, the protection of the weak against the strong; and, in a free state, it will discharge this function in such a way as to secure to every individual as much liberty as is consistent with the liberty of all the others. In the distribution of liberty it must be guided by justice. That is to say, it must pay equal attention to the conflicting claims of numbers and of merit. So long as it continues to represent the community it is sovereign, and must be obeyed. Its strength is the strength of the nation, and all action that tends to weaken that is treason to the national interests. It is impossible that a government should be too strong. It becomes oppressive, not through its strength, but only when it curtails unnecessarily the liberties of the whole, or of any particular section, of the community. A tyranny may be weak, but it is always oppressive, because it allows no legal liberty to any of its subjects. A socialist state will be oppressive, because it denies its due share of liberty to eminence in merit; and

a pure aristocracy or plutocracy, because it refuses to recognize the liberties of the undistinguished multitude.

The institutions of a free state may be considered under two heads: first, the substantive law; and secondly, the government, including both the executive and the legislature. No distinction was made in the preceding paragraph between these various forms of control.

Of the substantive law little need be said except that it must be clear and certain. If it fails on either of these points it becomes expensive in its interpretation, or irregular in its execution. The poor, for whose protection law is especially designed, are debarred from using it, and it becomes an additional weapon in the hands of the wealthy. Moreover, this evil, like most other evils, grows. The interpretation of the law gives rise to a separate profession of lawyers, whose direct interest it is to increase both its obscurity and the uncertainty of its operation. One of the first interests of freedom is that the law should be popular, and that the courts should be easily accessible and speedy and certain in their processes.

Next after decay of character, the worst danger to freedom in a commercial state arises in the substitution of material ends, or, in a word, of money, in the place of the national ideal. Strictly

speaking, money can never be a collective end, as a national end must be, if it is to command the common allegiance of all the citizens. However much a man may desire that his country should be wealthy, he never desires that it should be wealthy at his own expense. He toils for his own riches; and the enrichment of his nation, if he thinks of it at all, is a secondary consideration. The pursuit of money calls for no sacrifice of the self to the community, and, as an ideal, it is essentially disruptive.

The commanding attraction of money lies in its universality as a medium of exchange. It spares men all the risk and responsibility of specialization in their aims. At one time a man's heart may be set on the pleasures of the senses, at another on political power, or on social distinction; and his taste in pleasures may vary from time to time between the highest and the lowest forms of self-indulgence. Any section of his life which he devotes to one of these aims is largely, or wholly, thrown away when his tastes change and he turns to the pursuit of another. But this objection does not apply in the case of money. If he has that, all kinds of material gratification are potentially within his reach, and he can alter the direction of his expenditure whenever it suits him to do so. So long as he has money he feels safe, whatever

may happen. This not only recommends the pursuit of money, but at the same time, by diverting his attention, obscures the attraction of all other ends, even when they are material. With the pursuit of ideal or spiritual ends it is, of course, quite incompatible. It tends to absorb, and so far as it prevails, does in fact absorb, a man's whole being. And the higher and more abstract ends are the first to disappear. A man may be a good tradesman, and at the same time a good father and husband, but seldom a good citizen.

The extreme development of the abstract theory of commercial liberty was reached in the writings of Herbert Spencer, and of the so-called Manchester school of political economy. Its practical effects, which proceeded from the spirit of commerce and were largely anterior to the theory, aroused a lively indignation in writers like Carlyle and Ruskin, and indeed in all who were alive to the highest interests of our country. Its principle, stated briefly, was that government is in no way to interfere in the production or in the acquisition of wealth, but that its whole energy should be concentrated on the protection of wealth after it had been acquired. In the first of these aims it reproduced the political aspirations of the robber baron, who resents all interference on the part of a central government

as prejudicial to his own line of business. I use the present tense, as many of that trade are still to be found in Anatolia and elsewhere. The important difference is, that whereas the robber chief is contented to rely for his protection on his own right arm, the princes of finance and commerce expect to have the whole strength of the community at their back. This arrangement is open to many objections. The one that concerns us here, is that, sooner or later, it leads inevitably to national disruption, and the consequent loss of national independence. The original justification both of law and of government, and what makes them preferable to anarchy, is that they protect the weak against the strong, and thereby produce freedom. Obscurity in the law, and the extreme liberty which is demanded by the school of *Laissez faire* reverse the process. They add strength to the strong, and annihilate freedom. Their eventual result, if their operation is left unchecked, is a return to the anarchy of nihilism, or to what Rousseau calls a state of nature.

The first result of a commercial liberty which leaves the weak without protection against the strong is, as might have been expected, the rapid concentration of wealth in all branches of finance and commerce. The small shop gives way to the big store; the local banker is absorbed by the large



centralized banking company ; large farms take the place of *petite* culture ; factories, of cottage industries ; speculators in millions, of speculators in thousands ; and so forth. The ultimate result is the growth of colossal fortunes in the hands either of corporations who, as such, have no conscience, or of individuals who, in the pursuit of wealth, are, and must be, in the same defective condition. For, as has justly been remarked, 'all the great prizes are for the unscrupulous.'<sup>1</sup> 'Large trading concerns beat smaller simply by their superior strength as fighting organizations.' A few of the unsatisfactory consequences of this tendency, as far as they affect freedom, must now be briefly indicated. The list does not pretend to be exhaustive.

In the first place a colossal fortune, in private hands, exposes a national government to the danger of corruption or intimidation. Public ends may be postponed to private interests. It is certain that the attempt will be made, and that in some cases, if not in all, it will be, eventually, successful. Government will be suspected, and will lose the confidence on which it depends for its influence with the people. Again, the power of wealth may make itself felt, without resort to the grosser forms of corruption, by its influence, mainly

<sup>1</sup> Kidd, *Principles of Western Civilization*, p. 428.

through the Press, on public opinion, and in a hundred other ways that elude detection. The effect will be disastrous to the authority of government, and, especially with a people which has always been impatient of control, to the cause of freedom.

The same danger threatens the economic development of a nation, by a double tendency, first, to supplant national by international interests; and, secondly, to erect a despotism within the nation, with power to defy the government. The great capitalist whose object it is to acquire money without regard to conscience or sentiment, and to whom patriotism makes no appeal (and this is the kind of being of which we are treating) will invest his capital in any country where it brings in the highest interest. His only concern with his own country will be to rely on its strength to support him in enterprises, which may, in fact, have the effect of undermining the very strength on which he relies. His sympathies will be divided between the land of his birth and the land of his investments, whereas the former claims the whole. If he is a producer, his first aim will be cheapness of labour. He will find it in countries where the wants of the labourer are the simplest and the least highly developed; and competition will tend to reduce the position of labour in more civilized

countries to the same low level. This, as has been pointed out, gives the black and yellow races an advantage over the white, and tends to reverse the course of civilization. Finally, the excessive disparity of fortunes is an outrage on justice, and sows the seeds of civil war.

The creation of a monopoly is the universal aspiration, or final end, of successful capitalism. It proceeds from the same mental characteristic, which allows no limits to dreams of conquest, and which forbids philosophers to be satisfied until they have reduced all the contents of their thought to a single universal principle : and it is ineradicable. A monopoly in any product or convenience which is essential to the well-being of the citizens is, so long as it is maintained, an independent power within the state, which the state, as has been shown by unsuccessful attempts in America, has not yet been able to cope with by peaceful methods. Private citizens are at its mercy, and, when the process has gone far enough, will cease to be free. It is a direct incentive to civil war.

The evil does not rest here. Freedom is the leading condition of evolution, the principle which makes progress possible. In stagnant communities, like China, the people may exist for centuries in a state of suspended animation, which cannot properly be called either freedom or slavery. But,

where the spirit of progress is active, it inspires all classes of the community from the highest to the lowest, and none will submit to a life which excludes them from participation. It follows indeed, from our definition, that if they did the whole community in which they are citizens must lose its freedom, and cease to hold its place in the general advance of humanity. When, therefore, owing to the weakening of government through the principle of *laissez faire*, or for any other reason, the liberties of the powerful have gained so much ground as to invade the rightful liberties of the weak, the latter will, and ought to, resist with every means at their disposal. It is in the best interests of their country that they should. No community can attain its full strength when the free activities of the majority are unjustly curtailed.

It is in this aspect that the Revolution in France can be best understood. The people there, being unused to self-government or popular institutions, had recourse to brute force and bloodshed, and put themselves under leaders who were infected with Rousseau's views as to the advantages of a state of nature. In our own country they have adopted the forms of freedom, and organized themselves into unions, in which the personal interests of each individual are subordinated to the prosecution of an end which is common to all. This end is not the

national end, but something quite different, and must often oppose it.

A trade union, when fully organized, may have its definite number of members; its special rules or laws defining the liberties and responsibilities of each individual member; its sovereign government; and its common and clearly understood final end; which binds the members together in one community. It answers all the conditions of freedom; and may exercise more power, in proportion to its numbers, than a much larger body of men who are loosely bound together under a feeble government which is handicapped by an excess of liberty. It will differ from existing governments in two material points. In the first place, its criterion of membership will not be nationality, but occupation in some particular form of industry; and, secondly, its end will not be national, but, following the general rule, a monopoly of power over all other classes of the community which are not included in the union. I may add here, as a probable conjecture, which, if right, is of great practical importance, that no such combination among the agricultural classes appears to be likely. They are too scattered to make it easy. At any rate they are not yet corrupted by the tendency. And, for both the political stability and the military power of any country, they are of greater value

than any other class of labourer. Their occupation ensures both physical strength and hardihood of character.

The disadvantages of an industrial ideal are many. In the first place it will be restricted to the material needs of a particular class of individuals, who, from the nature of their work, can never be highly educated. A national ideal embraces the needs of all classes, and, even when predominantly material, must contain elements of a higher order. Again, their mere numbers make workmen more formidable than capitalists. If it comes to the worst, a dozen millionaires can easily be disposed of, but one firing party will be of no use against a million workmen. And it is not to be supposed that the many, when in pursuit of a low material end, will show themselves less deaf than the few have been to the dictates of conscience and humanity, or less blind to their own ulterior interests. They will not be withheld either by patriotism or by the certainty of their own eventual ruin from yielding to the temptation of a small temporary gain.

One of the principal dangers of unchecked capitalism, is, as we have seen, the internationalization of capital. An analogous danger arises, but in a worse form, from unchecked labour. Common action is only possible among men who have a

common end, and when a particular class rejects the national end which binds together the rest of their countrymen, they must go for allies to men who are similarly situated elsewhere—that is to say, who have the same end as themselves, and a similar antagonism to the national end, whatever that may be, in other countries. This will undermine the national strength of all countries indifferently in which the disease has made serious progress, and will lay them open to subjugation by any other country, however barbarous, which is not infected to the same degree by the same disease. The internationalization of labour is indeed one of the most formidable of all the dangers which threaten our Western civilization, and it is the inevitable result of an unjust distribution of liberty.

It is obvious that the same consideration, in a modified form, applies to conflicts between separate nationalities within the complex of the same civilization. That country will have the best chance of success in which the principle of industrial selfishness exercises the least influence; and, if the conjecture which was hazarded a few pages back be justified, the total strength of each country will be largely dependent on the relative strength of its agricultural interest, when compared with the strength of all other forms of labour put together.

It is as well to repeat that when a war is over,

and the country, which owed its defeat to the prevalence of industrial selfishness, lies under the heel of a more healthy conqueror, it will avail nothing to the conquered to appeal to the sentiment of industrial fraternity. That will count for nothing against the national sentiment of an enemy inflamed by victory. The result will be the same to the vanquished, whether the type of civilization which goes under be national or international. The class which contributed to its downfall will be buried under the ruins—an inglorious Samson, whose strength has been used, not against his enemies, but in their favour, and against his own compatriots.

Many more illustrations might be added of the effects of excessive liberty in the pursuit of the profits of trade. It may reasonably be supposed that a complete political equality between women and men, by annulling the most ancient and the most deeply-seated form of division of labour, would be a source of extreme weakness in any nation which adopted it. But the demand is inevitable (it is useless to ask whether it is justified) by the heartless and scandalous conditions of female labour, when capital is allowed to suck dry the life-blood of helpless women. Disloyalty to the state is the certain reaction when, under the shield of freedom of contract, the landlord imposes his own terms on



an ignorant and helpless tenantry. The same result may follow if the principle of *caveat emptor* is held to justify another trade in poisoning the drink of the helpless labourer. In all these cases, and in many more, the state abdicates its function as the protector of the weak against the strong ; it suffers its own authority to be undermined, and freedom is destroyed by liberty.

One more observation will conclude our remarks on this section of the subject. Weakness in a government breeds further weakness. What distinguishes a workman from an amateur is the sense of responsibility. No man can feel responsible for what he knows it is impossible for him to perform. When the strength of a government has been sapped by the inroads of liberty, it becomes aware that it no longer has the power to discharge its duties, and its action becomes feeble and amateurish. Private benevolence begins to usurp the legitimate functions of government, and, being responsible to no one, does badly what a responsible authority might have done well. An efficient administration of the resources of a nation is one of the most valuable of the products of civilization, and a nation which is without it is as little likely to prevail against one which has it as the Aztecs were against the Spaniards. It has always been the habit of democracies when things go ill to blame their leaders,

and they sometimes go the length of tearing them to pieces. But, if they will neither fight of their own will, nor submit to coercion, how are their leaders responsible? Let the people accept the blame, and reform themselves, instead of wasting a childish indignation on their own puppets. Let them learn the habit of obedience, and they will soon find a leader.

### *Need of Reform*

That the degeneration of a nation follows close on its prosperity is perhaps the only sequence in historical events which approaches the certainty of scientific law. In Rome, as in our own time, the leading symptoms were the impotence of the senate and the degeneracy of the urban population; and the cause, an influx of material wealth, which removed all healthy restraint on self-indulgence. Excessive liberty brought about the loss of freedom. With us, the consummation has not yet been reached, though the danger is very real. Our safety, so far, has been due to the survival in sufficient strength, especially in rural districts, of the military virtues of patriotism and discipline. To one who has taken a part in the recent recruiting operations in an agricultural neighbourhood, the words of the Roman poet will convey both warning and comfort :

'Twas not the bastard brood of city slums  
That stained the seas with Carthaginian blood :  
But hardy lads from many a Sabine farm ;  
The sons of soldiers, skilled with spade and  
    plough,  
Afraid of nothing but their mother's frown.

In Italy, the free cultivator had been driven into the town by large farms worked by gangs of slaves, and that source of strength was exhausted. It may be hoped that no considerations of gain may lead to its disappearance in England, and the substitution, in its place, of agricultural machinery. In the towns also the degeneracy of character which follows the exclusive pursuit of material welfare has not proceeded nearly so far, though there, it must be admitted, the signs are menacing. Attempts have been made to discredit the cause of national union ; but the followers have been, as a rule, half-hearted, and better counsels have, as yet, prevailed. Moreover, even there, the military spirit still survives in considerable strength, and the call to arms has met with a generous response.

Nevertheless, no disinterested observer can be blind to the numerous symptoms of degeneration which mark the present course of our commercial civilization, or to their rapid growth on both sides of the Atlantic. Self-indulgence, with all its attendant vices, has sapped the strength and lowered the ideals at every large centre of trade

and industry, and in every grade of society : the government has no longer the strength it requires either for efficient internal administration or for the full organization of its resources against foreign enemies. Among the labouring classes, disruptive forces have appeared, which menace the national unity, and are obviously capable of involving the whole community in irretrievable disaster ; while, from the opposite end of the social scale, Capital is apt to put gain before country, and an insincere literary philosophy, too timid to look fact in the face, and too soft to accept the fatigues and the sacrifices of patriotism, renders the same service to our enemies by discrediting our faith in national ideals. All these evils (and the list might be prolonged) are due to inordinate craving for liberty, and, unless that is counteracted, they will certainly increase.

Practical proposals to this end must be prepared to encounter a double difficulty. Retrenchment of liberty is always unpopular, and more than ever when the habit of self-indulgence has become inveterate. Again, democracies are not less greedy of flattery than despots are, or more likely to take in good part any indication of their defects. A writer who ventures to point them out, or a statesman who proposes to cure them, may count on an unfriendly reception. Nevertheless, the healthiest man is liable to smallpox, and a powerful physique

does not make it wise to refuse to be vaccinated. Finally, it should be borne in mind that the intention of this essay is to deal with general principles which are valid for all forms of civilization, and that any references which may seem to be concrete are used chiefly as illustrations, and not as proofs. Any or all of them may be called in question without materially affecting the value of the argument as a whole.

### *Remedies*

It remains then to inquire whether there is any remedy which ought to be adopted by all countries, in both hemispheres, when they are threatened, through excessive liberty, with national disruption. It seems evident that little can be expected from special measures directed to the redress of particular abuses. Unless the prevailing atmosphere, which favours nothing but liberty, is altered, they will soon cease to work, and fall into neglect. They would share the fate of Arctic vegetation transplanted to the tropics. The essential preliminary to all successful treatment is a change in the atmosphere; that is, a change in the national character. To that end there is only one means—that is a change in the national education. If the new element which is introduced in the national education is in harmony with older tendencies,

which, though at one time powerful, have suffered a temporary set-back, the change should be easy. A language which it took years to acquire may be recollected in a few days.

No doubt can be left as to the direction which the change should take. When freedom is threatened with destruction through an excess of liberty, the remedy is not to reduce the love of liberty to what might be called a golden mean, but to supplement it by a fervent love of law. One of the most important functions of freedom, we may recollect, is the production of power for the defence of the national ideal against foreign aggression; and a nation would be in a bad way if for that purpose it had nothing to its credit but a lukewarm affection for liberty. What it requires is a passion for liberty, controlled and directed by a respect for law. A respect for law can only be gained by discipline, and discipline can never be too strict so long as it leaves the love of liberty intact, and confines itself to the task of checking its corruptions, and holding it firmly to the pursuit of the most elevated ends.

Again the strength of a nation is drawn from two opposite sources—commerce, and military power; and it may be attacked either through its commerce, or, more obviously, by arms. It must be prepared to defend itself against all forms of aggression. Of these, military force is certainly

not the least dangerous; and, in order to repel this danger, it is the duty of every nation to maintain its own military power at the highest attainable degree of efficiency, without at the same time impairing the strength which it derives from its commerce. The spirit of commerce is allied with liberty; the military spirit with law, or discipline: and here again the all-pervading rule of strength holds good. Of the two opposed principles, you cannot keep one and reject the other. You must either keep both or lose both. The best type of citizen is not either the soldier or the civilian, but the civilian-soldier.

Finally, a nation can exert its full strength only when it is united in the pursuit of a common end. The end of commerce, as we have seen, is material wealth, and the effect of that is not to unite but to divide. Every man who pursues that end fights for his own hand, and, in the heat of conflict, loses sight of all the higher considerations of morality which bind men together as a nation. Devotion to material wealth can only be counteracted by setting up by its side some opposed end which is not material; and the ethical alternative is patriotism. Patriotism implies the readiness to sacrifice all material ends; it is directly opposed to the spirit of commerce, and it is one of the distinctive virtues of the military spirit. To a

generation which has been accustomed to regard the accumulation of wealth as the sole criterion of success, such counsels may seem absurd ; but the teaching of history is plain ; and in that school there is no third choice ; you must either learn, or be flogged. What kind of a flogging it is, Poland can tell. It compares with a school punishment as a battle-field does with a cricket match.

On three independent grounds the military spirit is absolutely essential as an ingredient in the national character of every commercial state :—

(1) As a curb on the unbridled love of liberty, which, by undermining the respect for law and order, exposes the state to internal disintegration, and consequent ruin.

(2) As a source of the military strength which is required for the protection of commerce.

(3) For the support of an elevated spiritual end, which unites all the citizens in a common cause, against the competition of selfish material ends which divide them. Of the two, liberty must always take the lead. We desire law as the means to liberty ; not liberty as the means to law : and, in accepting law, we sacrifice a part of our liberty to freedom.

The military spirit can only be maintained by a military education, and, in order to make that



education effectual, two conditions are indispensable—it must be universal, and it must be sincere.

A resort to ballot for filling the ranks leaves the liability to service universal ; but it is objectionable in principle, because it fails to employ the whole of the nation's military strength. And this, I believe, can never be justified. The alternative is what is called the voluntary system. This offends against the conception of freedom we are now advocating in many ways. First, like the ballot, it leaves the nation at below its full strength. Again, instead of unifying, it divides the citizens into two classes, the civil and the military, with opposed ideals. If the army is small, it is useless, if it is large, it will overpower the civil element, and subordinate the aims of commerce to its own. This is the real danger of 'militarism'—a danger which may be safely neglected in a democracy, where every man is both civilian and soldier in his own person. Finally, a large standing army, though it no doubt will have military aims, will not prosecute them in the true spirit of a citizen soldier. Its spirit will be still, in the main, commercial. However patriotic the individual soldiers may be, the inducement which made them join the ranks, and keeps them there, is their pay. They dispose of their services in the open market, and do not give them, like the Spartans at Thermopylae, in obedience to

the command of their people. Voluntary service has too strong an infusion of the commercial spirit to furnish an effectual antidote to commercialism.

The danger of insincerity is very real in a country where the sense of responsibility has been sapped by a permanent want of power on the part of the government to enforce its own orders, and where nearly everything, except the pursuit of money, is conducted in the spirit of an amateur. The discipline we require is not that of the half holiday or the picnic, but a severe training in spade work and long marches, and all else that may qualify a man to take part in immediate service in the field. Less than this will not avail us against an enemy who is vigilant and better prepared.



# **INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM**



## INTERNATIONAL FREEDOM

It has been observed at an earlier stage in this inquiry that freedom is a term which is not properly applicable to the human race as a whole, but only to individuals as communities of impulses, and to nations as communities of individuals. But, though that appeared to be a good reason for postponing the consideration of universal ends, or universal laws of morality, the treatment of the subject as a whole would be incomplete and unsatisfactory if all reference to a possible extension of freedom, beyond the fields in which it has already been realized, were omitted. A few lines must be added about the meaning and the practical requirements of universal freedom.

If the idea of freedom is to be raised to a higher level, it must be extended to the relations between nation and nation ; nations being, at the present stage of evolution, the only units which intervene between individual men and humanity as a whole. From national or political freedom, the next step should be to international freedom. In order to

realize the idea of international freedom it would be necessary, first, that nations should be united in the prosecution of an end which is common to all of them ; secondly, that they should be ready to make national sacrifices towards the attainment of that end ; and, finally, that they should acknowledge the presidency of a sovereign authority, which should determine the amount and nature of the sacrifice, and be in a position to enforce its own orders.

The only final end which is common to the whole of humanity, when regarded as a collective unit, is advance to a higher level of civilization ; and this end can only be attained by an observance of the laws of morality. It would seem to follow, as a logical consequence, that if all men could be induced to submit themselves, without reservation, to the full law of morality, they would at once attain the ethical purpose of the race. But this would be a mistake. The consequence would be the extinction of morality ; for it is quite certain that morality is wholly dependent on conflict, and if all men were of one mind there would be no conflict. Without evil, there would be no good. This is as true in conditions of stagnation as in conditions of progress. Even the most stagnant society is dependent for its existence on the observance by its members of the rules of morality. The universal extinction of con-

flict, and of the morality which is its necessary condition, is a pure fancy, such as no man of sense would care to waste thought on.

Stagnant civilizations—that is to say, communities which are held together by rules of morality, but exhibit no visible signs of progress—are extremely common. They constitute, indeed, by far the larger section of humanity, and there is no apparent reason, except a faith in the future, which itself has no base in reason, why they should not eventually embrace the whole of humanity. But these conditions, were they ever realized, would completely defeat the final end of humanity as a whole; that end being not merely existence, but advance to a higher level. Existence by itself, independently of the use which is made of it, is of a low value, or none at all.

The element in morality which saves us from stagnation, and secures our advance to a higher level, is freedom. Civilizations which are free are progressive, those which are unfree are stagnant; and freedom consists in the proper adjustment of the conflicting claims of liberty and constraint. If humanity as a whole is to advance, it must be guided by the retention of the same compromise among the community of nations. So long as individual nations are at liberty to pursue, each its own end, subject to the constraint of the laws of morality,



so long will the whole community of nations to which they belong enjoy freedom, and be capable of progress ; but no longer.

The principle of international freedom has been explicitly rejected by one of the principals in the present conflict, Germany by her representative thought proclaims, and in her collective action enforces, the doctrine that in conflicts between nations each party enjoys complete liberty of action, untrammelled by any moral considerations whatever. This amounts to a restatement of Rousseau's fundamental principle of complete liberty, and a return to a state of nature ; but the application this time is to nations, instead of to individuals. If law is essential to progress, the necessary implication of this doctrine is that evolution stops with nations, and that beyond national progress there is no possible progress of humanity as a whole. In consonance with the same principle which explains the advocacy by capitalists of the doctrines of free trade and free contract, so, in the present case, the repudiation of the moral law emanates from the people which believes itself to be the strongest, and is directed against the liberties of the weak.

It remains to add a few words, first as to the nature and limits of any possible international law, and finally as to the means by which it may be enforced. It is quite certain that the law which

regulates the practice of war among nations cannot be identical with the moral law which regulates the intercourse between individuals during peace. The moral law itself is not fundamental, but derivative from the law of the individual conscience ; but consciences are not all alike, and the commands of the conscience of a single person may be, and often are, in conflict with the law of public morality. It is not therefore surprising if, in the same way, the law of international freedom should differ materially from the moral law of political freedom. It will be a more remote derivative from the commands of the general conscience, which contain the germs of all ethical law whatever.

For instance, to take human life, in a private quarrel, is only justified to the consciences of a great majority among ourselves by an immediate danger to life which there are no other means of repelling. In this case there is no necessary reference to the moral responsibility of the assailant, and no tribunal to decide as to the necessity. In the next higher stage, that is to say when the offence is against the community, life will not be taken unless moral responsibility on the part of the criminal is proved before a tribunal which is itself responsible. In both cases the fundamental justification is the same—that is, the preservation of life, first of the individual and secondly, of the

community with its national ideal; but the conditions will be different, and, with them, the means of defence. In the case of the moral law when it is enforced by the state a new element is introduced; that is, moral responsibility on both sides of the transaction: of the offender on one side, and of the tribunal, as representative of the community, on the other.

The fundamental aim of international law is, in the same way, the preservation of life, but in this case it will be raised to a higher level. It will no longer be the life of the individual or the life of the community which is to be protected, but the life, under conditions of freedom, of the whole of the human race.

These considerations are applicable to stagnant communities, or to stagnant conditions of life over the whole human race. Men cannot exist except in communities, nor can a community exist without a moral law; but it is quite conceivable, and, on the analogy of other lines of evolution, not even improbable, that the human race as a whole may exhaust its power of evolution and stop short as a community, or number of separate communities, like those of bees or ants. In that case there might, perhaps, be no war; but, with the cessation of evolution, there would be no freedom: for the whole purpose of freedom is to enable men to rise

to a higher level. The frustration of that purpose would be the greatest calamity that could befall the human race. It would mean the extinction of all their higher aspirations, and of everything in life that they now regard as really valuable. Morality itself will be transformed, and become a lifeless code of rules like the rules which govern a swarm of bees.

War, therefore, though not a good in itself, is the highest expression of that conflict between good and evil which is the universal and necessary form in which the course of evolution runs. The recognition of this truth supplies us with a basis on which we may define, with some reasonable prospect of success, the aims which should inspire a law of nations, which has for its final end the further evolution of the human race as a whole.

The first deduction is that the primary aim of international law will not be the suppression of war. In the first place, no sane man, reviewing the present condition of mankind, will believe that to be possible; and the commands of a tribunal which aims at an obvious impossibility will not inspire respect. In the second place, it is not even desirable. Its realization would mean the downfall of civilization through the rank growth of the vices of peace. What, then, should the aim be? The answer, when once given, is clear and certain.

The object of an international tribunal must be to exert its whole influence on the side of the good principle in its conflict with the principle of evil. No one is likely to object to this as impossible, still less as undesirable.

A few words of explanation may be useful. The conflict between good and evil in this life is the conflict between progress in evolution on one side, and on the other the sum of the forces which oppose evolution, and impose on the human race either stagnation, or, not impossibly, extinction. The maintenance of progress is not merely the most difficult task which the race has to cope with : it sums up the whole of its difficulties. Decay sets in directly the effort is relaxed. But, on the other hand, it is easy to go downhill. And as, in the case of a national state, no grain of power can be spared for the maintenance of its national freedom ; or, in the case of an individual, moral freedom can only be attained and preserved by his exercise of the utmost resolution and vigilance : so, in the case of humanity at large, progress can only be maintained by throwing on the right side of the balance every grain of the power which it has at its disposal. It will be a strong reinforcement to the cause of good, if humanity can assert a collective adhesion to the principles of goodness, and support them when they are attacked. And it is unable

to dispense with even the smallest grain of power which may be employed for its protection, but demands all that can be derived from every source. The absence of international law, well informed and properly directed, would mean the loss of freedom and the cessation of progress.

The initial aim, then, of international legislation is not the suppression of war, but the maintenance of peace. And there is no fear that, in the prosecution of this aim, it will achieve a suicidal success. The propensity to war is so strong, and the occasions of gratifying it so frequent, that it will be fortunate if it secures sufficient intervals of peace for the cultivation of the arts of civilization. So much, indeed, it would be reasonable to hope for, but only if it confined its intervention to cases in which there was some prospect of its being successful. When the national existence of one or both of the combatants was at stake, it would not be listened to, and its authority would be discredited.

This limitation does not apply, or at any rate not with the same force, within the next field in which international morality can and ought to exert its influence. Within war itself, the motives which are called in play are of every rank in the scale of morality, and range from the most sublime heights of heroism to the lowest depths of depravity. Again, the methods or imple-

ments employed vary greatly in their degree of destructiveness. On both these points, I believe, international law may intervene effectively, and, if it can, it is certainly in the interest of humanity at large that it should.

There is practically no limit to what may be written on this subject; but I must confine my observations to one branch only, without pretending to exhaust even that. It is urged that moral force is of equal value with military force, and that nations may be conquered by breaking their spirit as well as by defeating their armies; and it can hardly be denied that both of these methods combined are stronger than one by itself. The right to employ both, and to push each to its furthest limit, will be asserted by the nation which claims complete liberty, or emancipation from law—that is, by the strongest, or the one which believes itself to be the strongest. The claim will extend to the employment of means against combatants and non-combatants alike, which are degrading to the character of the men who resort to them, or which are such as to threaten the ultimate extinction of the race.

The opposed nation either may retaliate, or, preferring its honour to its existence, it may refrain. In the latter case it will fight against serious odds, and, if at the start it is the weaker, it will be likely

to succumb. Whether it be right for a nation to accept martyrdom in defence of its national ideal may be debated : there are many who would think it should. In that case it would probably be defeated, and the higher ideal would be sacrificed to the lower, to the disadvantage of all the world. Or it may elect to retaliate by accepting the enemy's methods. In this case its own character would deteriorate ; and again there would be an extension of evil. The result to humanity at large would be the same.

The investigation of the methods and principles of international law is a special subject. We need only add that it seems certain that there must be a tribunal with a final authority to enact rules ; to decide questions which arise under them ; and to enforce obedience to its orders. How that tribunal is to be constituted is a question on which, at present, it would seem premature to pronounce a definite conclusion. The whole subject is in its infancy, and we must wait for further experience. That the decision through natural evolution may take a wholly unexpected form is suggested by the fact that only a few centuries have elapsed since when the Pope occupied something very like that position in Western Europe, and enforced his orders by spiritual penalties. In our times we rely on voluntary co-operation between nations



for the enactment of the rules, and on little more reliable than voluntary submission for the execution of the orders. This stage is evidently rudimentary and precarious, and the vital interests of mankind as a whole, demand that the constitution of the tribunal should be more intelligibly defined, and its powers very greatly enlarged.

Towards the latter object the expedient most frequently suggested is outlawry from the comity of nations. Outlawry is merely a translation of the word excommunication, and the two measures, though not the same, are closely analogous. Where they differ, the advantage is, I think, on the side of the spiritual weapon. The penalties of excommunication, or interdict, were religious, and, in an age of faith, they were invested with a force such as now we are hardly able to realize. The sufferings of every class in the Empire, and especially of the poorer classes, during the worst periods of the struggle between the Pope and the Emperor, were intense, and comparable to the ravages of a famine, or of a hostile occupation. And there was no counter effect on the authority which inflicted them. To the Pope and his subjects it was a matter of indifference whether the Germans were eternally saved or not, and it cost them nothing to maintain the excommunication as long as it was required. Outlawry from the comity of

nations affects the outlaw mainly in his commercial relations; it is not likely to cause him great unhappiness; and the measure may react in a serious loss of wealth for the authority which imposes it. It is not therefore likely to be maintained for long. Where spiritual outlawry failed, commercial outlawry is not likely to succeed. Nevertheless, it is not necessary to deny that it might have a certain measure of influence.

The question, however, is not whether international law has any influence at all, but whether it has all the influence which it is possible to invest it with. In the defence of human freedom, it would be criminal to neglect any available source of strength. It must be remembered that they who assert perfect liberty and reject the restraint of the moral law are always that section within a community which is, or believes itself to be, the strongest. The function of law is the same throughout every stage of social development. In the association of impulses which makes up an individual, it protects the weaker and more lately developed among them against the furious passions which are inherited from the savage: in the association of individuals which makes up a nation, it protects the weaker and poorer classes against the robber baron and the landlord or capitalist; or, again, in a later stage, the few who are eminent

above their fellows against the greed and envy of the masses ; so, in the association of nations which make up mankind, it protects the freedom of the weaker against the tyranny of the strong. Further, we must remember that the function is continuous and interdependent throughout each of the successive stages. There can be no free nations without free men, and no freedom for humanity as a whole without free nations ; nor, again, if we descend the scale, can there be any free men without freedom for humanity at large. The highest interests of every individual and every nation are inextricably involved in international freedom, that is to say, in maintenance of international law. That is the vital concern of all alike ; and the assailants will always be the strongest members in the community of nations. To be neutral in the defence of international law means to leave one's own most vital interests to the protection of that party in the conflict which will, presumably, be the weaker.

Now, military force, though not the only source of strength, is probably the most valuable of all ; and, if the elevating effects of military experience, both during preparation and in the field, be taken into account, it is certainly indispensable. Any nation which neglects this, and fails to keep it at the highest possible point of efficiency, sacrifices

a large portion of its possible strength, and is unfaithful both to itself and to humanity at large. Moreover, the unrestricted growth of the commercial vices of luxury, sloth, and dishonesty will speedily undermine its strength, even in the realm of commerce. Finally, the pursuit of material wealth will ensure, sooner or later, its political disruption. It will become a negligible quantity, and its voice will cease to be listened to in the council of nations. The sacrifice which is entailed by the maintenance of a national army will not really be greater than what is imperatively demanded for the preservation of national independence, or indeed of freedom in any of the stages of its evolution. The cause of righteousness is one and indivisible, and has no use either for an economy of means or for a calculated devotion.

Either all must be armed or none. A small army has no better chance than a mediocre poet. If one nation arms, all the rest must follow, in order to keep that one quiet; if one remains disarmed, nature will assert her rights, and it will be partitioned among its wiser neighbours. The foolish virgin will find no friends to help her. As soon as there are more armies than one, competition will set in, and, for the same reasons which started it, it will not cease until each and all of them have attained their utmost limit of strength.

Even for its internal preservation every nation must have its army, though for that purpose only it need not, perhaps, be a large one. Arms can be bought by the citizens; internal crises will arise in which an unarmed police will be useless; and government will be paralysed. Put arms in the hand of a single policeman, and in the course of a very few years you must have a nation in arms. To suppose that peace may be maintained without preparation for war, or that the effort need be less than the utmost that all the associated nations are capable of, is a delusion. The offender will always be confident in his own strength, and the protests of unarmed peacemakers will have no more effect than the bleating of sheep or the angry demonstrations of a flock of geese.













